

# LONG ISLAND FORUM



OLD HOUSE AT LAKE GROVE, NEAR SELDEN

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**THE  
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 FOR LONG ISLANDERS EVERYWHERE  
 Entered as second-class matter May 31, 1947, at the  
 post office at Amityville, New York, under the Act of  
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**PAUL BAILEY, Publisher-Editor**  
*Contributing Editors*

Clarence A. Wood, LL.M., Ph.D.  
 Malcolm M. Willey, Ph.D.  
 John C. Huden, Ph.D.

**More About Snakes**

I was delighted with the splendid  
 article on snakes by Clarence Rus-  
 sell Comes.

As a young lad in Lynbrook I  
 came across a blacksnake with a  
 lump in its belly. After killing and  
 cutting, out slid a full sized toad  
 covered with slime, winking and  
 blinking in the bright sunshine.  
 After resting and drying, it hopped  
 off without a thank you. I never  
 had the nerve to state this fact.  
 I can believe what Mr. Comes  
 states. Many will not.

At another time I caught up with  
 a blacksnake endeavoring to swal-  
 low a toad, just about one inch of  
 whose legs protruded from its  
 mouth. I said "down the hatch"  
 and did not interfere.

While we had no rocks or stone  
 fences near the Southshore, black-  
 snakes were quite numerous near  
 ponds and streams. Garter snakes  
 were common. Milksnakes, so called,  
 one often found in cold moist places  
 as cooling cellars where milk was  
 kept. I wonder why so named. Some  
 believed they actually milked the  
 cow. The flat-headed adder was a  
 nasty little fellow about twelve  
 inches long, dust colored. They  
 were not easily discovered and when  
 disturbed the head would flatten in  
 a "v" shape. A hissing noise came  
 forth. A large variety also existed.  
 Do I like snakes? NO!

A blacksnake can bite or sting.  
 A neighbor suffered from a wound  
 for several days. Too many times  
 have I observed blacksnakes up in  
 trees after young birds, the slither-  
 ing things watching and waiting  
 for the baby birds to become almost  
 fully grown for the snake's "going  
 down" party.

As youngsters we went snake  
 hunting in early Spring when the  
 snakes were out for a sun-bath, in  
 brush or bush near ponds. Had  
 one pal that could and would grab  
 the tail of a snake and with a  
 swing of his arm and a quick snap  
 of the wrist, snap the head from the  
 body. Much blood was spilled by  
 this method.

My last experience with a large  
 snake was on my home grounds.  
 Many kinds of birds highly excited  
 were flying at and about a very

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## Sidney Ritch, Singing Soldier

**S**IDNEY H. Ritch, native of Suffolk County and long resident at Middle Island, was a jolly joker, a gifted singer and a talented chronicler of his experiences as a soldier in the Civil War.

His life began at Port Jefferson May 27, 1840. Neither the date of his death nor the identity of his parents is known to me. He was a tall muscular man with black hair and was still alive in 1885 for in that year he became a charter member of the Suffolk County Historical Society.

As a very small child he was left with his grandmother and an uncle at Middle Island. His father removed to North Carolina where he taught school in Hyde County. He died when Sidney was but four years of age.

As a lad of 19 Sidney Ritch for a short while in 1859 pursued the life of a seaman. During the winter of 1859-60 he was back at Middle Island and apprenticed as a carpenter.

During the summer of 1862 at the call of President Lincoln for more volunteers Ritch joined up with Suffolk's Company H of the Island's 127th regiment under the command of Col. William Gurney of Southampton and Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart L. Woodford of Southold lineage.

While for two weeks the regiment with others was stationed on Staten Island awaiting clothing and equipment Ritch recorded that they stood guard "with clubs and condemned muskets". In lieu of a promised State bounty, Col. Gurney made a stirring appeal to their patriotism. When finally moved to Baltimore they were treated to a sumptuous supper, the last they were to enjoy for nearly three years. Having passed two days and a night they at last arrived at the capital.

There according to Ritch

*Dr. Clarence Ashton Wood*

they expected to be invited into the President's parlor, where they might perhaps "suffer the agonies of a private interview with the 'old man', puff into oblivion a few of his choicest brands, listen to a round of his crackling jokes", and then be "politely ushered into elegant sleeping apartments, the downy couches of which were made doubly soft because a Simon Cameron or John Morrissey once found sweet repose in the pe-fumed foam of the snowy coverlets."

Instead, with the "canopy of heaven" for their ceiling, "the verdant earth" for their bed and a "shoddy blanket" for a covering, the regiment bivouaced in a field. There they passed the night with "bright dreams and brilliant visions" of the battles of Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and of "hanging Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree."

The next morning they took account of their patriotism and found it had "depreciated about ten per cent". Some of

the boys, he says, had lost it all on the march during the night and "never deemed it worth going back after."

The winter of 1862-63 they spent in the defense of Washington. In the spring they were ordered into the field. Then began long, tedious marches. On the road to Hagerstown they passed a signboard saying "Kilpatrick is not dead yet". One of the boys became deranged. Running about the field with his finger pointed heavenward he continually shouted: "There's a light in the window for thee."

In one battle two intimate friends of Ritch were killed. While the batteries were firing in the morning one of them wrote in his diary: "If I am killed today, God help my mother."

One day a shell struck a cook house of one of the regiments. The building being of logs and mud, it was demolished. For a short time the only visible objects were mess pans, kettles and a thick cloud of dust. After the excitement subsided the debris in one place was seen moving. A mo-



Soldiers of World War II Singing at L. I. State Park

ment later a Dutch cook emerged saying: "Vot in heell ish de madder?"

Their leisure time was often occupied in fighting sandflies, gnats and mosquitoes. Oft times the drinking water had been drained through the bodies of fallen horses. In Greenfield they found only one accessible well of water. That was filled with calves heads, hens, chickens and whatnot. Cleaning out the mess and putting down a bag of charcoal, shortly the water was "purified."

The voice of the "swamp angel" disturbed the slumbers of the men from Long Island. That angel was the first Yankee gun to carry death missiles into beleaguered Charleston.

One night came the news of the fall of Savannah. Thereupon all the troops turned out at midnight. They gave three cheers and the band played. Because of the dense fog, however, Ritch tells us "some of the notes didn't come down until the next day". Some of the artillerymen also "got their ramrods fast in the fog and couldn't get them out until it cleared".

In Savannah Ritch became acquainted in the post office with General Harrison's grandson, John Taylor, Stanley G. Trott and others of note.

He also met some agreeable ladies with excellent vocal talents and enjoyed many moonlight excursions on the bay. However he wrote such experiences "with Southern beauties with golden, raven, auburn or any other tresses are appropriate for poets and love sick swains to prattle about, but is naught compared to being homeward bound after a three years knockabout in the war."

During the passage to Charleston by steamboat the men were obliged to boil their coffee on deck over lighted candles. En route an altercation took place. In the excitement the tall soldier from Middle Island threw a chap out of a third tier bunk to the floor.

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# John Lyon Gardiner's Judgeship

**I**N 1799 Abraham Woodhull of Setauket was named as First Judge of Suffolk County. He served on the bench until 1810, and was the third person to hold this important position following the American Revolution. The other two had been Selah Strong (1783 to 1793) and Ebenezer Platt (1793 to 1799).

The fourth judge in this distinguished line (and all of these men were eminent in their day) was—but that is the footnote to history with which this article is concerned, for the man who actually became the next First Judge was not the man who first might have had the appointment.

In December of 1809, Judge Woodhull had served on the bench for ten years. At the time he was 59 years o'd. He had led a significant and active life. Of him, Pelletreau writes, "He was a man of conspicuous talents and occupied many positions of public confidence." Thompson in his *History of Long Island* echoes the same theme: "He was an individual of good abilities, and much engaged in public life." Of all his public service none was more dramatic than that performed in his role as one of the major links in the secret service activities of General George Washington during the years of the American Revolution. It was Abraham Woodhull who provided the intelligence in the series of documents signed "Samuel Culp" or Culp, Sr."

Judge Woodhull's term was set to expire in the autumn of 1810. He did not desire reappointment. Late in 1809 the question of his successor was being raised by men of political influence. In the last week of December, Thomas J. Lester and Ezra L'Hommedieu of Southold journeyed to East

Dr. Malcolm M. Willey

Hampton to discuss the impending vacancy. Thomas Lester was a lawyer who had studied under L'Hommedieu, and succeeded to his practice. In the legal profession of their day, these two were outstanding and their judgment carried great weight.

On that December visit to East Hampton they had intended to confer with John Lyon Gardiner, seventh proprietor of Gardiner's Island, and himself one of the outstanding figures of eastern Long Island. He was a man of multitudinous interests, leading agriculturalist, a local his-

present author in "Farming on Gardiner's Island," Long Island Forum, October, 1951). In brief, John Lyon Gardiner was a first citizen of Suffolk County in every meaning of the term.

On the day of the intended call by Mr. Lester and Mr. L'Hommedieu, John Lyon Gardiner was not at home. Whereupon Mr. Lester wrote Mr. Gardiner a letter, December 30, 1809. "Disappointed in not seeing you last week when in Easthampton, I have on reflection communicated by letter that which was the principal object of my going thither." The "principal object" concerned the appointment of the First Judge of Suffolk County.

"The office of first Judge of this county will soon become vacant by reason of the age of Judge Woodhull," Mr. Lester wrote. "The appointment of a suitable person to an office of no inconsiderable consequence to the interest of and reputation of the county," he went on, "has called the attention of the people generally to the subject of nominating his successor." Mr. Lester observed that "party distinction is kept out of view in selecting the candidate." He then came directly to the point: "Your friends, by which I mean your acquaintances generally, on this occasion have cast their eyes upon you, and feel anxious that you should consent to accept the appointment. This wish of theirs I presume has been made known to you by them through various channels before this time. I presume this merely because I know the wish to be general." Mr. Lester indicated, however, that his own concern was deeper than many others because he was "a practitioner in this court."

Judge Woodhull himself was agreeable to the naming



Hon. Ezra L'Hommedieu

torian of some distinction, widely read and intellectually curious and alert. He was author of "Notes and Observations on the Town of East Hampton," published in *Documentary History of the State of New York*. He recorded a brief vocabulary of the Montauk Indian language. His contributions to early agricultural practice were recognized in his election as an honorary member of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture. (This story has been told by the

of John Lyon Gardiner as his successor. Mr. Lester had, before writing the letter, consulted him. "He expresses a great willingness to resign, indeed from many considerations seemed anxious if a suitable person could be selected as his successor. After he had named many of all parties and declared himself dissatisfied with them, I mentioned your name. He approved the selection in very high terms . . . The result of our interview was that if we would assure him of your acceptance of the office, he would resign during the winter in your favor."

Mr. Lester then made a plea that the offer be accepted. "It is a duty we owe to the community in which we live, when the voice of that community calls into exercise for its benefit our time and our talents, to comply with its demands . . ."

John Lyon Gardiner was not one to shirk a public duty, as his extensive correspondence clearly reveals. He had a high sense of civic obligation, and one can easily imagine the conscientious care with which he considered this letter. To be sure, he had through two other close friends earlier learned that his name was being seriously considered as First Judge. But with the communication from Mr. Lester before him, his decision had to be made.

And to what decision did John Lyon Gardiner come?

For a week he gave the matter his "maturist consideration." Then he wrote Mr. Lester:

"I received your very polite letter of Dec. 30 on Sunday last," he begins, "and regretted that I had gone from my house here (at East Hampton) to Gardiner's Island when you and my friend Mr. L. Hommedieu came here to see me." He admits that the object of their mission was not unknown to him. He writes: "From Dr. Sage (Dr. Ebenezer Sage of Sag Harbor, then a member of the national House of Representatives) and H.P. D. (Henry Packer Dering of

Sag Harbor, collector of customs and postmaster) I learnt before I received yours that some of my friends had thought of me as Judge to succeed Judge W. in case he resigned his office." Dr. Sage was a friend of long standing and as a member of the Congress he corresponded regularly with John Lyon Gardiner. Likewise there was an intimate association between Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Dering, and this is reflected in numerous letters. It is not surprising that these two were informed concerning the possibility of a judgeship for John Lyon Gardiner, for they were central in all political discussions involving the East Hampton region.

Mr. Gardiner continues his letter to Mr. Lester: "No person can have a more grateful sense of the good opinion of friends and acquaintances than I have—but I do believe their confidence has led them too far in mentioning my name for that office. That I may perhaps have general knowledge of the principles of Jurisprudence I shall not deny, but cannot think that my knowledge of the Statutes of this State, or acquaintance with the forms of the Courts can justify me to myself or best friends in accepting that office, and I know very well

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## Our South Shore Inlets

A few weeks ago Mrs. Helen Woodman Harris of Amityville gave me a photograph of Hemlock Inlet. It had been taken during the first decade of this century and showed a run of water between two sloping, sandy banks. A sailboat made its way in. Unfortunately, the print was not sufficiently clear to be used here.

Hemlock Inlet seems to have a haze of mystery and romance about it possibly due to the name. Long Island's outer beach at the site of Hemlock Inlet had been called Hemlock Beach although no hemlock tree had ever been seen to grow there. Nearby Cedar Beach, of course, has plenty of native cedar as does the entire barrier beach. But a beach with hemlocks seems to appeal to the imagination

*Julian Denton Smith*

*Secretary Nassau County Historical Society*

much the same as does a beach with a sunken forest.

Hemlock Inlet came and went in typical Long Island fashion. It acted like countless Long Island inlets have done. In our day we know something about the life of an inlet whereas earlier an inlet might have made and filled with very few people being the wiser. Millions now set foot on the beach where in my father's youth scarcely a score walked.

There are few who do not marvel at the coming and going of an inlet. It is a demonstration of the force and power in water, a working of nature, which we comprehend

and respect. It makes more real the Bible story of the two men who built their houses on sand and rock.

Inlets never seem to break through the beach on beautiful summer days or calm, warm July nights. Long, severe fall and winter storms are what make inlets—storms which extend over several high tides especially those big tides which come on full moons.

About forty years ago Jamaica Bay has two inlets, the Rockaway Inlet and one at Edgemere. I do not believe the latter ever had a name. The Rockaway peninsula used to look like, and actually was a barrier beach—sand dunes, beach grass, beach adders, summer cottages, tents and boardwalk. A good, old-fash-

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View of Fire Island Inlet From Lighthouse Tower About 1800

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## Letters From Our Readers

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dense fir tree near my home. Approaching carefully, I saw about ten feet away on the branches, a large blacksnake with evil eyes about to devour a young robin. What could I do but get a long handled tree pruner. No, I did not cut it in two. It slid from the tree. The nest contained one dead bird, perhaps the last of three or four. After all, it's nature's way — fish eat fish, man eats hot-dogs. My bedroom story for tonight!

Let me refer you to a correction in the splendid article on "Looking back at Sayville." It was Leon F. Szolgosz not Scolosz who shot McKinley — "Standard Dictionary of Facts".

George E. Hart,  
Wading River

Note: Mr. Hart, well known horticulturist and a charter member of the Wading River Historical Society, knows whereof he writes when the subject is wild life on Long Island.

\* \* \*

### "Old Inlet"

"The Story of Old Inlet" by Paul Bigelow and William L. Hanaway is the title of a pamphlet well worth having in any local collection. After tracing the ownership of what was once The Manor of St. George's in Brookhaven town, the authors tell us that "Old Inlet, as we know it now, is not an inlet but is an irregular four sided piece of land", etc. It is on the outer beach beyond Bellport Bay and near this property there once was an inlet, one of ten such lying "between Hallock's Gut (opposite Center Moriches) and Fire Island Inlet."

But the Old Inlet of which Messrs. Bigelow and Hanaway write is a beach club which was organized in 1908 by a group of Bellport residents who included Mr. Bigelow. The latter has certainly done a fine thing for posterity in helping to compile and publish the pamphlet.

\* \* \*

### Islander's Return

Long Island is going to see a lot

more next year of one of its native sons, S. S. Conklin, prominent West Coast newspaperman and political leader. S. S., who was born at East Islip, has disposed of his interests in California's Long Beach Press-Telegram of which he was secretary-treasurer and associate manager for many years, and plans to visit here during 1953. He will not sever all connections with the far West, however, as he still owns the Lakewood News-Times, of southern California.

The son of an East Islip blacksmith, Conklin began his newspaper career in 1905 on the Miami (Florida) Metropolis. Five years later he moved on to the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch as classified advertising manager, then in 1916 to the advertising managership of the Omaha World Herald. The following year he became business manager of the Omaha Daily News, and

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## South Shore Inlets

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ioned, rip-snortin' storm roared up the coast one fall, possibly the same fall Hemlock Inlet came through, and pushed tide after tide into Jamaica Bay, as it did all the bays on Long Island. The drive of the storm permitted no ebbing between high tides. Jamaica Bay took more water than it could hold even after flooding all the marshlands from Canarsie clear around to Inwood. The excess water rose into the beach dunes from Wave Crest to Rockaway Point.

At Edgemere a little trickle found a way between the dunes to run across the beach down into the ocean. The trickle became a brook, a stream, a creek, a river, an inlet. In time the south end filled with sand but the north part—north of the Long Island Railroad tracks—is still kept open and is known as Norton's Creek.

Captain Abe—and that was the only identification he needed for hundreds of friends and acquaintances, his full name being Abram Bedell Smith—used to tell of a heavy storm that lasted several days. It would not let the tide fall out of Great South Bay and instead mounted high tide on top of high tide. He said it seemed like all of Freeport would go under water.

When finally the storm moved on, Captain Abe, telescope in hand like every southshore bayman, climbed into his garret to see how the bay looked and if any ships had come ashore and wrecked on the outer beach.

Baymen's garrets have almost disappeared from Long Island homes. Such a space was an architectural feature of the old houses, a space used by every male in the house as well as the tomboy girls. It was not a storage place as much as an observation post, a place of lookout. I believe the word *garret* is of French

derivation and carries a meaning of lookout place.

The garret was a floored-over space between the roof and the ceiling of the rooms beneath. It seldom extended four feet in height at the ridge of the roof. A window looked out from the south end of the garret and had a board nailed before the panes at just the right elevation to support the large end of a telescope when the small end levelled to the eye of the observer spread on his belly on the floor. Entrance to the garret was made by climbing a portable ladder and crawling through a hole in the ceiling of the room below.

I have the telescope used by my branch of the Smiths in the garret of the Merrick home. It is brass covered with leather. On the drawtube my grandfather scratched a line to indicate how far to draw the tube to bring distant objects into proper focus.

My father and uncle used to spread out on their garret floor at Merrick and sight the old telescope across the bay and beach to pick up steamships out on the ocean. They could identify any of the ships

by the colors on the stacks and the general outlines and rigging.

While thinking of garrets, mention should be made of the other garret in the old houses, the high garret. It was over the main part of the house and high enough to stand erect in. Here was storage space for all sorts of discarded furniture, clothing, and household implements—a wonderful place for small boys to play on rainy days. If a house had a "birthin' room" it would frequently be in a part of the high garret, the part above the kitchen so that it could be heated from the kitchen stove in cold weather. A flight of stairs led to the "birthin' room" and the high garret from the kitchen.

And Captain Abe crawled into his garret with his telescope. He was startled to find two gaps in the line of the outer beach and water running through each. He thought one was about opposite Swift Creek and the other one to the east a half a mile or so. Again so much water in the bay as to overflow it and find a way out

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Where Tides Played Havoc

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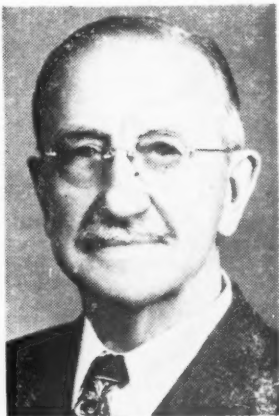
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## Letters From Our Readers

Continued from page 188

three years later with W. F. Kellogg purchased the Anaheim (Cal.) Herald.

In 1922 S. S. purchased an interest in the Long Beach (Cal.) Daily Telegram, becoming its business manager, secretary and treasurer. When two years later this paper and the Long Beach Press merged



S. S. Conklin, Islipian

he was named secretary-treasurer and associate manager of the Press-Telegram Publishing Company, which position he gave up with the sale of this influential daily to the Ridder interests.

Mr. Conklin, who is one of southern California's best known leaders of the Democratic party has a lot in common with other Long Islanders who went west in earlier days to attain success in journalistic fields. These include William E. Woodruff, a native of Fire Place, Brookhaven town, in 1795, who in 1819 founded the Arkansas Gazette, the first daily west of the Mississippi; Prentice Mulford, born at Sag Harbor in 1834, who became editor of the San Francisco Call; George Sterling, also a native of Sag Harbor who became poet laureate of California, and Charles R. Street of Huntington who founded several newspapers on the west coast and served in the California Legislature during the tempestuous Gold Rush era.

While back on Long Island next year S. S. plans to visit a sister, Mrs. Grace Broseck of East Islip, and Mrs. William J. Myers of Northport whose grandmother, the late Mrs. George Ed. Call, was another sister.

Continued on next page

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## Letters From Our Readers

Continued from page 190

### Patchogue Author, Editor

Another native-born Long Island author, as well as editor, was Grant Martin Overton, born at Patchogue September 19, 1887, whose death on July 4, 1931 terminated a successful career. He was literary editor of the New York Sun and fiction editor of Collier's Weekly. Among his novels were *World Without End*, *The Thousand and First Night*, *The Mermaid*, and *Island of the Inno-*



Grant M. Overton

cent. He also wrote a number of factual books such as *Authors of the Day*, *The Women Who Make Our Novels*, and *Why Authors Go Wrong*.

Someday I hope the full story of Grant Overton's brief life will be told.

M. K. Stowe

Note: In the July 1941 issue of the Forum, a sketch on Grant Overton's life and work was given by his half brother, G. Burchard Smith, prominent Nassau County attorney.

\* \* \*

### It's Bald Hills; Not Hill

Noting a reference by a writer in the Forum to Bald Hill, I rise to remark that as long as I can remember, which is quite a few years, the name is Hills, not Hill. It is not simply a single eminence but a number of them, located near Selden, north of Patchogue.

Alfred Pope

Continued on next page

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## Letters From Our Readers

Continued From Page 191

### Another Strong Pamphlet

The fourteenth pamphlet containing "true tales" of early Long Island, by Miss Kate Wheeler Strong, Setauket historian, was issued recently. It is being sold by Miss Strong (address Setauket) at \$1 postpaid. As only 200 were printed, orders should be sent Miss Strong without delay.

These true tales, like others previously reprinted in the author's pamphlets, first appeared in the Long Island Forum, for which Miss Strong has been writing regularly each month since 1940. Needless to say, they are based on the author's thorough knowledge of island history, especially that of Brookhaven town's north shore where her family has dwelt for some 250 years.

The Strong family has played important roles in the public life of Suffolk County. Each generation has added to the collection of documents, diaries and other data now in the possession of Miss Kate Wheeler Strong. This collection has been the source of much of the material woven so interestingly into these true tales.

\*\*\*  
Statement

of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946, of the Long Island Forum, published monthly at Amityville, N.Y., for October 1, 1952.

The name and address of the publisher and editor is Paul Bailey, Amityville, N.Y.

The owner is Paul Bailey, Amityville, N.Y.

The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

Paul Bailey, Publisher  
Sworn and subscribed before me this 8th day of September, 1952.

Hugo C. Waldau, Jr.,  
Notary Public,  
Suffolk County, N.Y.  
(My commission expires Mch. 30, 1953)

\*\*\*

### Sag Harbor Fordham

I would miss the Forum a lot not to receive every issue. I find so very many interesting articles pertaining to my former bailiwick on Long Island, although none of our very large family is left but me.

J. N. Ferham  
602 East 5th St.,  
Santa Ana, California

Continued on page 196

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## Long Island Forum Index

Index of Long Island Forum, years 1938-47 inclusive. About 40 pages compiled by Miss Marguerite V. Daggett, Librarian L. I. Collection, Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica 2, N. Y. Done by photo offset process. \$1 postpaid. Order from Miss Daggett.

### Seaman House, Plain Edge

F. Kull's photo of the Seaman House at Plain Edge, on your July cover, was fine. Could some reader supply further facts on the Seaman who lived there?

(Mrs.) Georgia Creel

## Island Indians Friendly

I HAD always understood that the Indians in this part of the island were friendly to the early settlers, so was glad to find documentary evidence to that effect. On September 18, 1675, Governor Andros wrote Mr. Woodhull of Setauket as follows:

"Gent: I yesterday rec'd yours of the 13th instant so long a coming (as the Indyan saith) by reason of the wet weather. I arrived here on the 9th, and am sorry to heare that you as well as the most part of the Island have been so alarmed upon a false report of our Indyans ill intent against us, which I endeavored and hope is now Rectified, and all Partyes well satisfied and quiet; some officers from all the Towns on this side Seatalecott, and all the Sachems of Long Island and neighborhood on the maine, having been here with mee since; And although I did hope you would not be alarmed, yet I writ you on the 11th which I hope came well to your hands and satisfide you."

The Governor goes on to tell that he has ordered an armed sloop to cruise the Sound, as there was fear of the New England Indians raiding the Island. Also, he had set out on the 12th in his own boat and sailed as far as Mr. Pell's to meet the Indians there (probably Westchester).

From there he had gone to Flushing, thence back to Manhattan from whence the letter had been sent. All this he had done, he said, "the better to settle the people's minds." As a result of his own observations he planned to have the Indians' guns returned to

### Kate Wheeler Strong

them so they might hunt game and thus prepare for the winter. This did not apply to the Indians of Easthampton and Shelter Island, however, as they were said to have had dealings with the Narragansetts of Rhode Island.

The Governor wrote Mr. Woodhull that he was also sending letters to John Topping, Justice of the Peace, and Captain John Howell, in East Hampton. The Indians there, however, had the Rev. Thomas James of the East Hampton Church write Governor Andros. In this letter they expressed their loyalty to the English and pleaded for the return of their guns so they might have skins to clothe them and food for the coming winter. This letter was signed by a number of local Indians in behalf of all the Montauks.

On the back of the letter, however, Preacher James wrote that while he felt the Indians could be trusted, other local white people thought it too risky to return their guns. The preacher's idea was that these Indians should first be converted to Christianity which was in accordance with the King's desire. This letter was dated October 5, 1675.

In a reply dated October 16, the Governor announced that his order must stand, but that the Justice of the Peace in his discretion might let a few trustworthy Indians have guns for a time.

The foregoing facts are taken from Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York.



Long Island Indian by George R. Avery

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## Sidney Ritch

(Continued on page 184)

Following this exhibition of his physical prowess Ritch was politely informed that he had played a joke on the bully of the regiment. "It was but an accident", nonchalantly observed the hero.

For four months during the spring of 1865 the 127th regiment was stationed at Charleston upon the inhabitants of which the horrors of war had been visited. Col. Woodford (by then or later a General) reported under date of March 6 that instances of want came to him daily and hourly which he was powerless to alleviate. The tediousness of the long wait until the South and Jeff Davis admitted defeat was in part alleviated by song in which Ritch and George B. Reeves, another gifted singer from Mattituck, were leaders.

A dozen song books were donated by someone in New York City. A class was formed which was drilled once a week by Ritch. Woodford selected a quartette composed of Ritch, Reeves, James Henrie Young of Orient and one Van Buskirk.

In early July the regiment from Long Island embarked on the steamer Northern Light for home. Those of the regiment who had survived were mustered out at New York.

Although the Northerners had entered Charleston as conquerors, the Courier newspaper said in its issue of June 30, as the Yanks were about to embark, that "the notes of triumph were hushed for those of conciliation, harmony and security."

After three years service in the war Ritch returned to Middle Island where he again applied himself to the trade in which he had been apprenticed before the war.

About 1870 he went to the metropolis to cultivate his voice and further his musical education. He also served as chorister at the Tabernacle church in Greenpoint (not Greenport). There he met and married a young lady vocalist and thereafter they lived at Middle Island. Both, during subsequent years, taught many old time singing classes

in that vicinity, as also did George B. Reeves in Southold town.

A Deed dated Oct. 11, 1667 was filed in the office of the clerk of Suffolk County at Riverhead in Dec. 1890. By it Thomas Moore conveyed three acres of meadowland in Southold town to Barnabas Horton. The witnesses named were Jonas Houldsworth and Martha Thurston.

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## South Shore Inlets

Continued from page 189

across the beach and down into the ocean, cutting new inlets in the process.

What Captain Abe saw, of course, were the two brand new inlets through the stretch of beach we now call Jones Beach. The easternmost became known as Zachs Inlet and the one to the west as Jones Inlet. Zachs Inlet went through the beach not far from the present tower. It shortly disappeared. Jones Inlet remains open and navigable, and has moved several miles to the west.

The volume of water back and forth through an inlet may not be enough to keep it open. The inlet then fills in from the east bank out into the stream. This is due to the movement of the tides as well as the general travel line of the sand in working along the beach front.

The fill from the east bank at first appears as a bar. Soon it comes up out of the water and assumes the level of the beach. By the time it has made across the inlet, the line of the beach shows no break either in the ocean front or the height of sand.

Our inlets always seem to fill from the ocean side, probably because only on that side are sufficient materials and the force strong enough to move them into place and keep them there. After the ocean end of an inlet is closed, the remaining lagoon gradually fills with mud, debris and general wash. It soon looks like the usual marshland of the north side of the outer beach.

It is not always that moving sand can close off an inlet. Frequently too much water runs through to permit much of an accumulation. Then the sand may form an offshore beach from the east shore of the inlet and overlap the west shore. Rockaway, Debs and Fire Island Inlets have formed thus and now valuable properties have resulted on the long extensions of the east

bank—Rockaway Point, Atlantic Beach, Fire Island State Park.

Man-made inlets fare no better than those nature models. During the early part of last winter (1951-52) I watched the dredging of an inlet across the western tip of Jones Beach. The purpose of the inlet was to divert tide-waters from the eastern edge of Point Lookout and to heap the fill on Jones Beach as anchorage for future operations aimed at controlling Jones Inlet.

Almost before the dredging of the new inlet had been completed the cut began to fill with sand from the east side at the ocean end. In twenty or so days it had filled across the cut, the bar had come out of the water and built up practically to the beach level. The dredging started once more and opened the cut as previously and in another twenty-one days it again filled with sand across the ocean end. No further efforts have been made to reopen the man-made inlet and it continues to slowly fill with sand and debris and will soon be forgotten. At present the bay end remains open and makes an excellent yacht basin.

The photograph from Mrs. Harris shows a typical Long Island inlet in that it broke through the barrier beach, stayed open a time, gradually filled from the ocean side, and a few generations later no one remembers just where or when it all happened—the name alone is recalled with a slight mythical, mystic significance.

### Design Originals for Fall

In the autumn every woman's fancy turns to thoughts of clothes with the tang of fall in colors and fabrics. Students at the Traphagen School of Fashion, in New York, show here some ideas that combine young lines and the newest mode—the soft petticoat dress, the higher neckline. They'll find favor with the college crowd because they are the work of designers in their teens and twenties who know what the young set wants.

Mary Dugasz (top left) chose taffeta in high-style black with

jeweled buttons for her afternoon dress. Mary Kauffman (top right) models a black wool with tiny dress-it-up white beaded collar, designed and made by classmate Mel Rock. It's the royal combination of red velvet and ermine (center) in Jeanette Zuraw's short formal. Purple corduroy (lower picture), one of the



season's loves, is Dori Bjerkin's selection. All are originals made in class at the Traphagen School where students who created them are majoring in Draping, Design and Clothing Construction.

### Col. David Hedges

Col. David Hedges (June 14, 1779-Jan. 1, 1856) was a silversmith at East Hampton. His house and shop were next south of Clinton Academy. He held many town offices besides that of supervisor. He represented Suffolk County in the State Assembly during 1825, 1829 and 1833. His son, Dr. John C. Hedges, left no descendant.

Upton Downs



Brooklyn Bridge, January 1899. Photo by Hal B. Fullerton.

## Letters From Our Readers

Continued From Page 192

### Brooklyn Bridge, First

With so many tributes being paid the architectural beauty of the Whitestone Bridge which connects our Long Island with the Bronx, we should not forget the good old Brooklyn Bridge which beginning with its formal opening on May 2, 1883 was for many years the only means of leaving the island except by boat.

As for the beauty of the Brooklyn Bridge in its day, the late Hendrik Willem Van Loon, historian, war correspondent, lecturer and

author, wrote: "The Taj Mahal is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful buildings ever devised by the genius of man . . . but when you approach Brooklyn Bridge without any prejudice it is quite as beautiful and even more imposing."

T. W. Prime,  
Long Island City

\*\*\*

Thank You

As each copy of the Forum ar-

rives I always wonder where in the world you have again located such tales of interest. \*\*\* All success to more and more good Forums. Mrs. Leslie H. MacRobbie, Patchogue.

\*\*\*

### Likes Strong Stories

I think Historic Roe Tavern was one of Miss Kate Wheeler Strong's best, although they are all so good that I marvel at her seemingly inexhaustible supply of material.

A. R. Rumfield,  
Long Beach

\*\*\*

Continued on back cover

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## John Lyon Gardiner

(Continued from page 186)

that my health—which for a year has been bad—my company and agricultural business on one of the largest farms in the Northern States, and business in other parts, would prevent my acquiring that legal knowledge without which I could not sit on the Bench with any prospect of honor to myself or good to my fellow citizens."

Mr. Gardiner was conscious of the honor that was involved and sensitive to the fact that the distinguished Judge Woodhull was favorable to him as his successor. His letter, on these points, continues: "You inform me that Judge Woodhull has been so candid and even so divested of political spirit as to say that he will resign in my favor—and you will oblige me by communicating to him my thanks for his good opinion and for the offer he has made of rendering the seat agreeable to me—but that considering my ill health, my living on an Island at one extremity of the County which would render it unusually inconvenient to myself and fellow citizens to transact business, that I am unacquainted with the Statutes of the State,

and that my health and numerous avocations will certainly prevent my spending any time to impress them on my memory—or if I did would be erased from it—that as I have never sat on the Bench, know nothing of the forms of the Courts doing business, which is necessary—besides that I do not know the other Judges (who are all old enough to be my Father) would be as well pleased as Judge Woodhull with my acceptance of the office, and for other numerous circumstances which delicacy forbids me to write—are my reasons for declining the office."

At the time he received the proffer of the judgeship and wrote this letter declining it, John Lyon Gardiner was just 40 years of age. All that he says in reasoning why he should not accept is true. His agricultural and business activities were extensive. His health was even then plaguing him, although he lived until 1810—six years later.

The letter ends unequivocally. "I must decline after the maturist consideration that I cannot now accept and do not wish my name put in for the appointment. I regret the necessity of my declining the more on your individual ac-

count and that of my friend Mr. L'Hommedieu."

Insofar as John Lyon Gardiner was concerned, that apparently put an end to the matter.

In 1810 Judge Woodhull stepped down as First Judge. He was succeeded by Thomas F. Strong who served until 1823.

### Deacon Joseph Osborn

Here is a bit of east end tradition. During the Revolutionary War, Deacon Joseph Osborn of East Hampton, on his way to church, was ordered by an officer of the British garrison to forthwith produce his team and cart to do service for the British army.

The Deacon inquired by what authority the officer commanded him and was told "by the authority of the King." "What king do you serve?" asked Osborn, and the answer was "King George the Third."

To which the Deacon replied: "My King is greater than your King. I serve King Jesus. He commands me to go to meeting and I shall go." With this the old hero continued on his way.

Upton Downs

### Liked Cathedral Story

I was so pleased with Mr. John Tooker's article about the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York as my husband's best friend was deacon there for many years and devoted much time and effort to its affairs.

I had no idea that Southolders were "tied up" with the great Cathedral.

Mrs. F. Stanley Parson,  
New York



## The Bowne House Historical Society

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## BOOKS

These items for Long Island students, libraries and collectors are now available. For particulars address the Long Island Forum.

Queens County in Olden Times, being a supplement to the several histories thereof. Henry Onderdonk, Jr., A.M. 1865.

Records of the Town of Smithtown, with other ancient documents of historical value, with notes and introduction by Wm. S. Pelletreau, A.M. 1898. 500 pages.

Huntington Town Records, Volume 1, 1887. Contains records from first settlement, 1653 to 1688 577 pages.

Select Patents of New York Towns. Frederick Van Wyck. 1938. Illustrated.

Ridpath's History of the United States, illustrated with maps, charts, portraits, diagrams, 1883. Well indexed. More than 700 pages.

Prime's History of Long Island with special reference to its ecclesiastical concerns. 420 pages. 1845.

New York Considered and Improved, 1695, published 1903 from the original MS in the British Museum. No. 199 of 400 printed copies.

The American Indian, 485 pages, by A. Hyatt Verrill, 1927.

Some Indians Events of New England, two volumes, 1934 and 1941, by Allan Forbes.

Joshua Moore, American, by George F. Hummel. A novel of colonial and national development. 1943.

Huntington-Babylon Town History, by Romanah Sammis. From earliest times to 1937.

When Winter Comes to Main Street, 1922. By Grant Overton, native Patchogue author.

Bailey's Long Island History in two large volumes. 1000 pages. 43 chapters, 200 illustrations, 13 separate town histories. I. I. Indians, Aviation, Agriculture, Whaling, Industries, Medicine, Banking, Churches, Geology, Archaeology and other subjects.

Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island. Harold D. Eberlein. Also includes those of Staten Island. 318 pages, many illustrations. Handsomely bound. Limited edition. 1928.

Historic Long Island. Rufus Rockwell Wilson. 1902. 364 pages.

Journal of the Life and Religious Labors of Elias Hicks of Jericho, L. I. 1832. 451 pages. This native son of Nassau County became one of America's leading Quaker preachers.

The Iroquois, A Study in Cultural Evolution, by Frank Gouldsmith Speck. Bulletin 23 of the Cranbrook Institute of Science, 1945.

Old Southold Town's Tercentenary. Ann Hallock Currie-Bell. 1940. 161p.

Nassau County, The Netherland of the New World. Arthur L. Hodges. 1940. 82 pages. Cloth binding.

Pirates and Buccaneers of the Atlantic Coast, by E. R. Snow, in six parts, illustrated. 350 pages. First edition. 1944.

Tom Masson's Annual for 1923. An Anthology of current articles, essays, etc.

Three Book Set, by Birdsall Jackson: Stories of Old Long Island, Pipe Dreams and Twilight Tales, How They Lived.

The Social History of Flatbush, and Manners and Customs of the Dutch Settlers in Kings County. Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt. 1899-1882. 351p.

Stony Brook Secrets. Edward A. Lapham. 1942. 146p.

## Pamphlets by the Forum

*Long Island, Cradle of Aviation*, by Preston R. Bassett, president Nassau County Historical Society. The island's part in world aeronautics, republished from Bailey's Long Island History.

*First Train to Greenport, 1844*, by Dr. Clarence A. Wood, for more than 40 years research attorney for the Court of Appeals, at Albany.

*History of the Storms and Gales on Long Island*, by Osborn Shaw, Official Historian, Town of Brookhaven; *The Hurricane of 1938*, by Dorothy Quick, Poetess and Novelist. Limited, numbered edition. Out of print.

*History of Setauket Presbyterian Church*, by Kate W. Strong, with introduction by the Rev. Frank M. Kerr, Hempstead. Limited number edition of 200.

*The Talented Mount Brothers*, by Jacqueline Overton, author of "Long Island's Story" and Librarian of the Children's Library, Westbury, with introduction by Harry Peters, art collector, critic, author and lecturer. Limited numbered edition of 500.

*Long Island's First Italian, 1639*, by Berne A. Pyke, former New York State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets.

*Streamlining a County Welfare Service*, by Edwin W. Wallace, Commissioner Public Welfare, Nassau County.

*To Florida and Back from Long Island (in 29-Foot Fishing Skiff)*, by Captain Charles Saydam, Jr., off-shore fisherman extraordinary.

*Ezra L'Honmedieu, Island Statesman*, by Dr. Clarence Ashton Wood. A biographical sketch of Southold Town's famous native son, "Father of the Board of Regents".

*History of Patchogue Congregational Church*, by Frank Overton, M.D.

*The Pottery at Huntington*, by Romanah Sammis, Official Historian, Town of Huntington. For sale by Huntington Historical Society.

*The Thirteen Tribes*, by Paul Bailey. A brief account of the Long Island Indians, including origin, religion, mode of living, habits, customs, and decline. Suitable for use in Social Studies. Illustrated.

*History of the Long Island State Parks*, by Chester R. Blakelock, Executive Secretary, Long Island State Park Commission. Republished from Bailey's Long Island History. For particulars address author, Babylon, N. Y.

*Birthplace of John Howard Payne*, by Dr. Clarence Ashton Wood, Contributing Editor Long Island Forum. A comprehensive presentation of conclusive proof that the author of "Home, Sweet Home" was born in New York City. Limited edition.

*A Small Boat Trip to Florida (Winter of 1947-48)*, by Captain Charles Saydam, Jr.

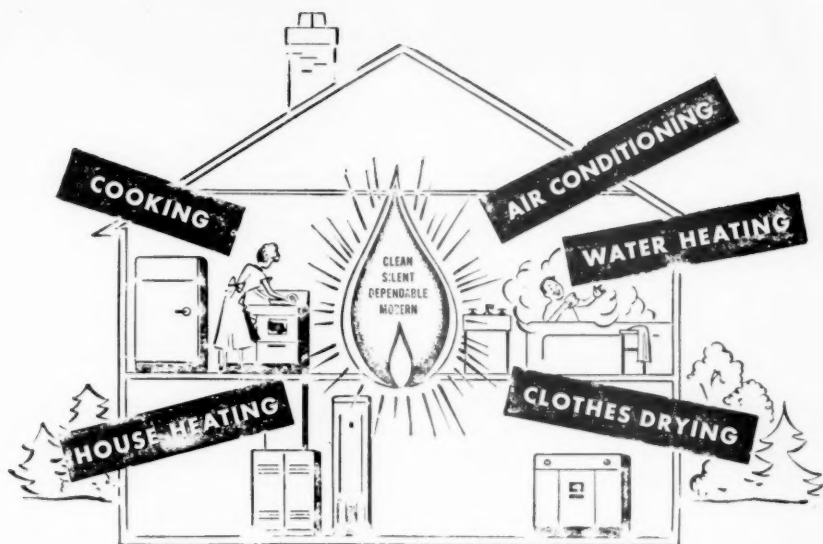
*Tree Tales* from the early days of Long Island, as told by Kate W. Strong, based on records, documents and other data in her private collection. 14 Pamphlets, each one containing a number of Miss Strong's original stories, reprinted from the Long Island Forum. For particulars address Miss Kate W. Strong, The Cedars, Setauket, L. I.

*Distribution of Wild Orchids on Long Island* by Roy Latham, well known authority. Limited, numbered edition. Sold by author, Orient, L. I.

*Five Thousand Years of Relief*, by Edwin W. Wallace, Commissioner Public Welfare, Nassau County; President, New York Association of Public Welfare Officials.

*Tales of An Island and Its People*, by Dr. Clarence A. Wood. A group of seven sketches on Long Island's famous horses and horsemen of yesteryear, and other historical subjects.

*David Frothingham, Pioneer Editor*, by Nancy Boyd Willey, Official Historian, Village of Sag Harbor.



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## Letters From Our Readers

Continued from page 196

Your Long Island Forum is a highly informative publication which I anticipate reading and passing on to others for their enjoyment. It's educational and historical value is greatly appreciated.

V. H. Nargizian,  
Hempstead

\* \* \*

## Book Wanted

Volume Three (biographical only) of Bailey's Long Island History is desired. Anyone caring to sell same, please notify the L.I. Forum.

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## Domine Polhemus

Please thank Marion F. Overton for me for that very fine story about Long Island's first Dutch Reformed preacher.

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